Western and Ashland Corridors *BRT*

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CDOT CHICAGO DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Welcome

The purpose of this open house is to:

- Introduce the project and the Alternatives Analysis process
- Provide additional information to the public about the project
- Solicit feedback from the community on the project

An Alternatives Analysis is a study of the potential impacts of the various project options. Each option or “alternative” includes different features and service plans.

This is the first phase of the planning process.

If you have questions, feel free to ask the representatives stationed around the boards.

This open house is scheduled from

5:30 pm – 7:30 pm

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How to Participate Today

- Sign in
- Review the exhibit boards
- Talk to CTA representatives
- Fill out a comment card
- Request assistance, if needed

What is Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)?

Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) is a term applied to a variety of bus service designs that provide faster, more efficient and more reliable service than an ordinary bus line. Often this is achieved by making improvements to existing street and traffic signal infrastructure.

Design Elements of Other BRT Systems

- Exclusive Traffic Lanes
- Transit Signal Priority
- Limited Stops
- Boarding Area Amenities
- Real Time Bus Arrival Signs
- Prepaid Boarding
- Streetscaping
- Wide Doors
- Level Boarding Between Bus and Curb

Cleveland

New York City

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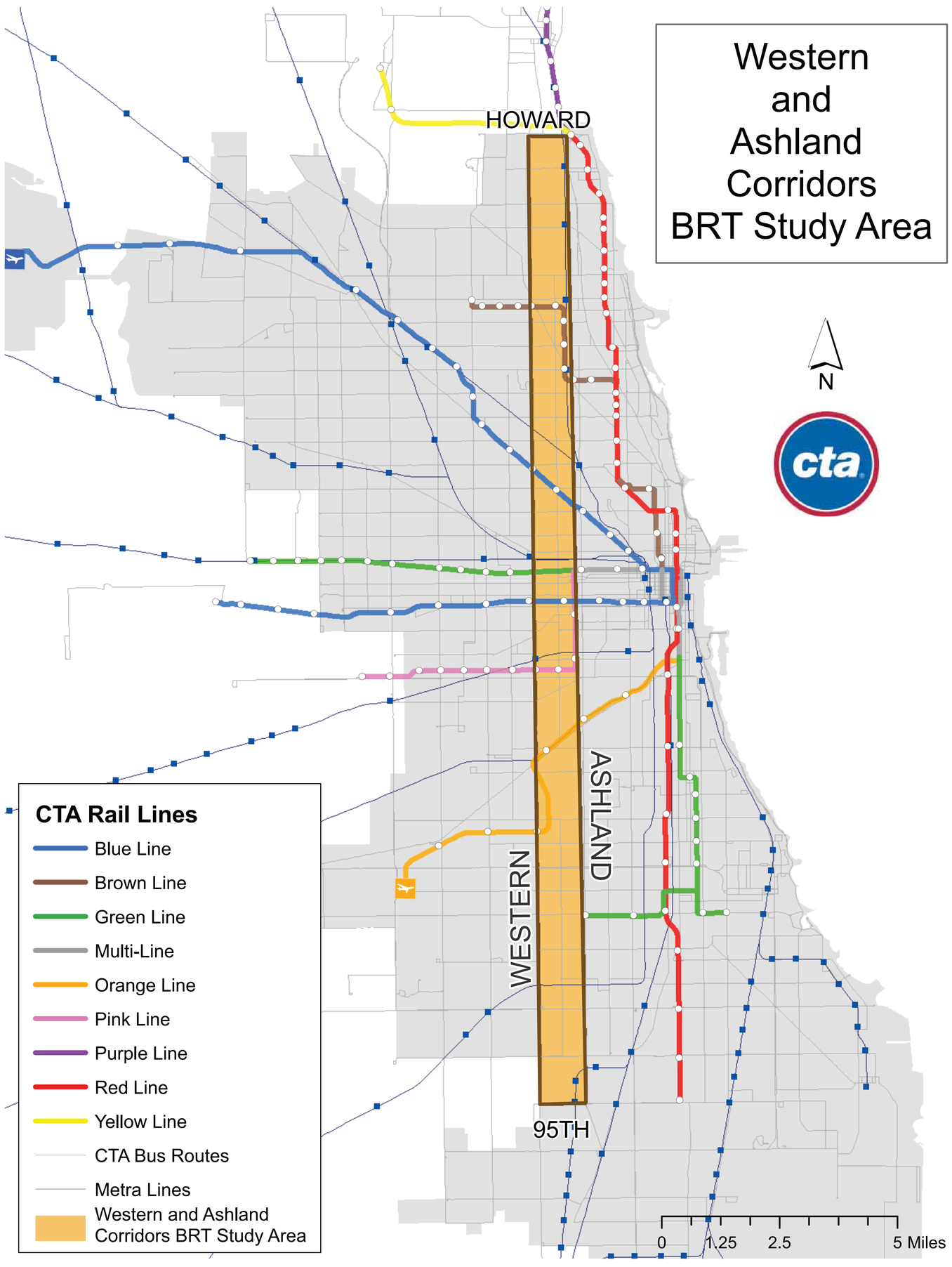
Project Overview

The CTA, in partnership with the Chicago Department of Transportation and the Federal Transit Administration, is performing an Alternatives Analysis planning study as a means of exploring options for a variety of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) features and service on both Western and Ashland Avenues. This planning study includes analyzing the positive and negative impacts of these BRT options.



The Western and Ashland Corridors BRT study area:

- Is approximately 21 miles long
- Extends along Western and Ashland Avenues, from Howard Street on the north to 95th Street on the south
- Connects to 14 rail lines (8 CTA ‘L’ and 6 Metra)
- Connects to 64 bus routes (58 CTA and 6 Pace)

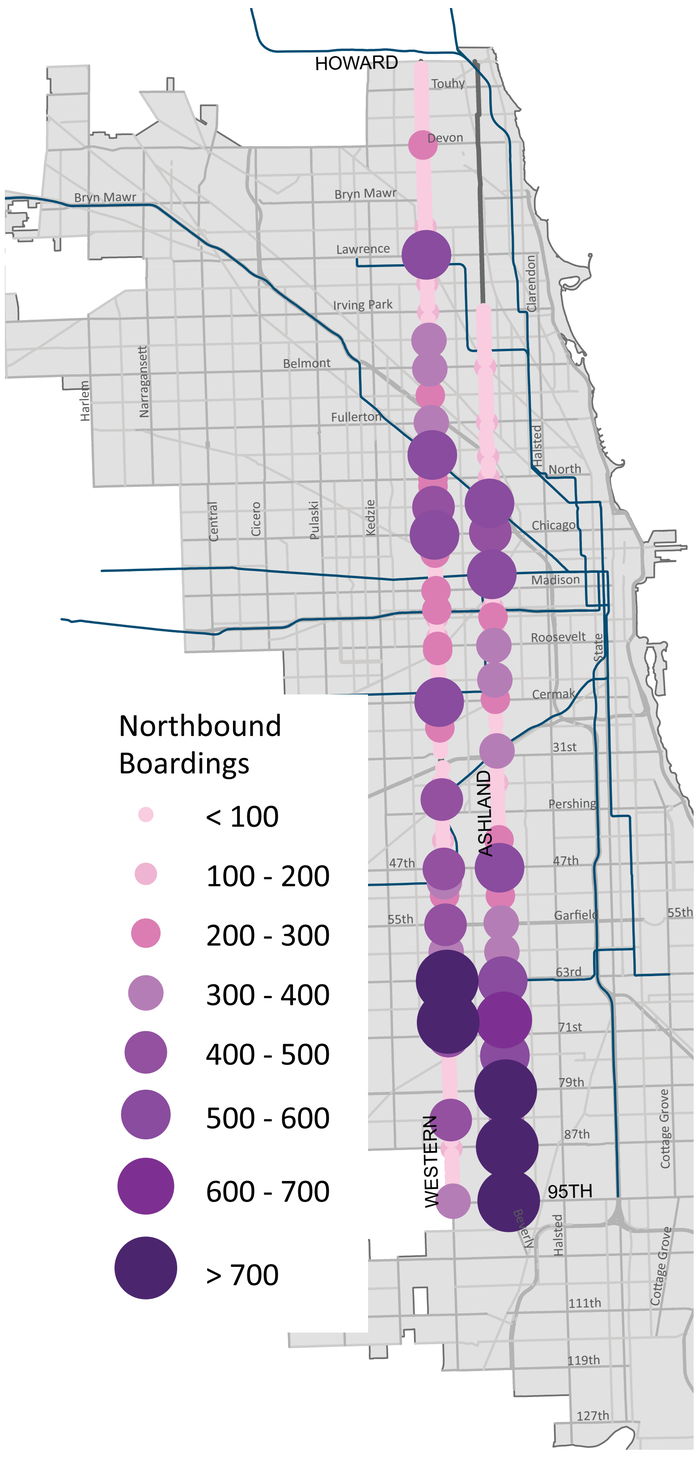
Project Background

2011 Corridor Ridership

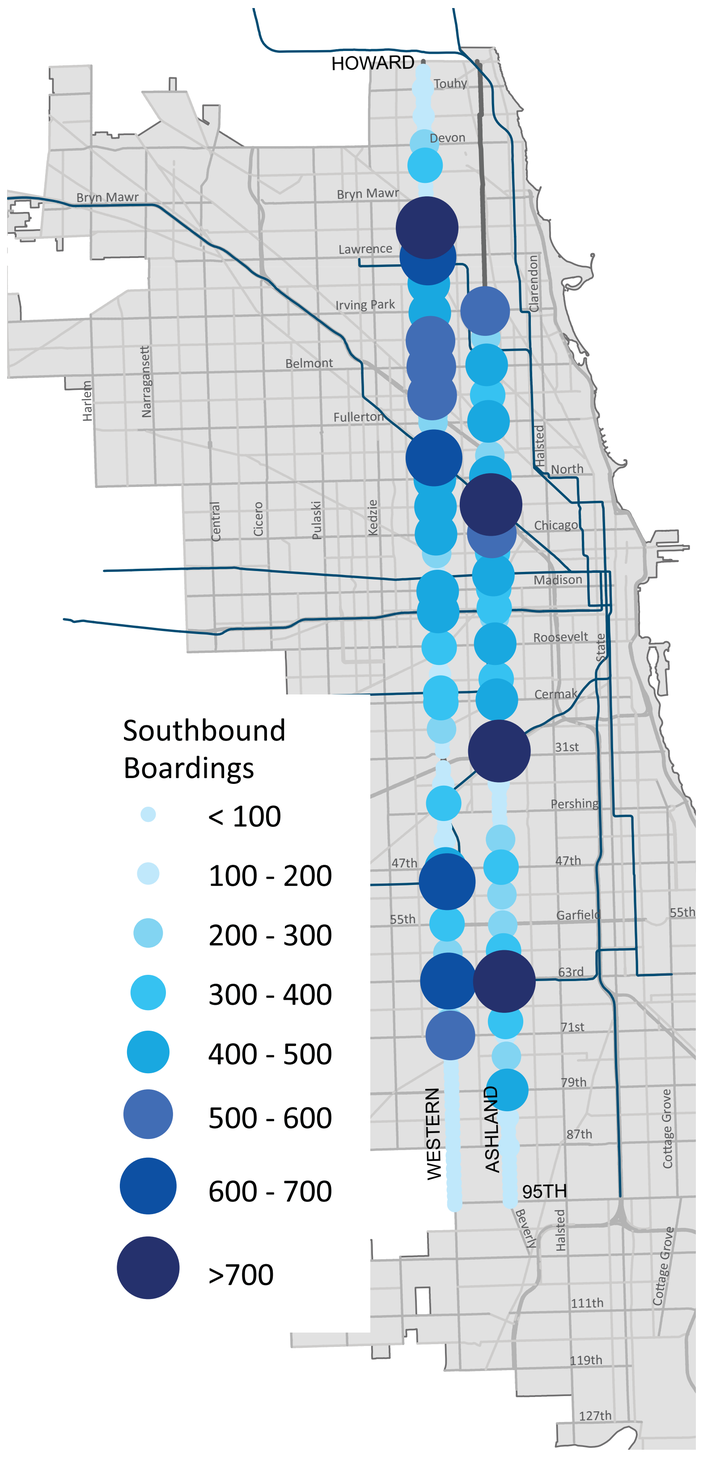
	Average Weekday	Average Saturday	Average Sunday
Western Avenue (Routes #49, #49A, and #49B)	34,855	23,804	17,052
Ashland Avenue (Route #9)	30,816	23,262	16,623

Daily Bus Boardings and Passenger Flow

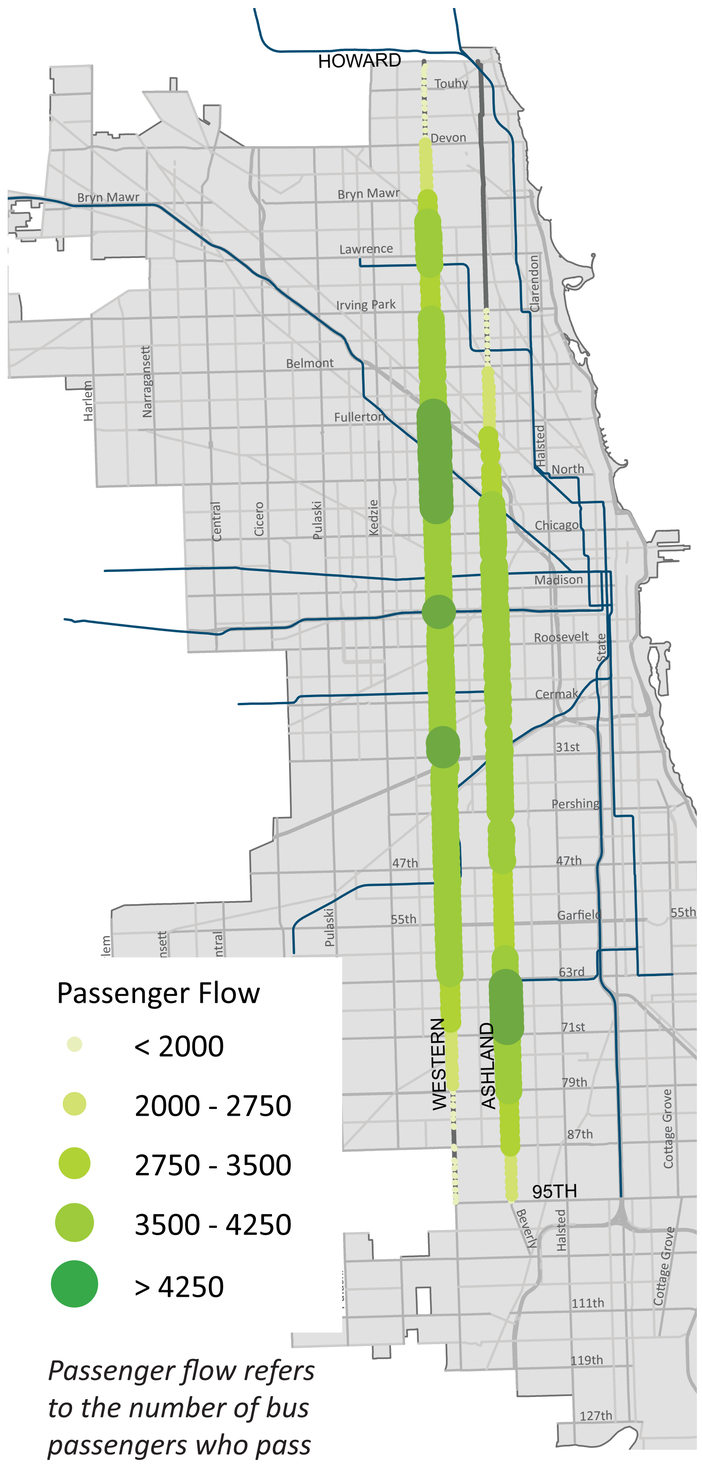
Northbound Boardings



Southbound Boardings



Passenger Flow



Passenger flow refers to the number of bus passengers who pass through a certain point.

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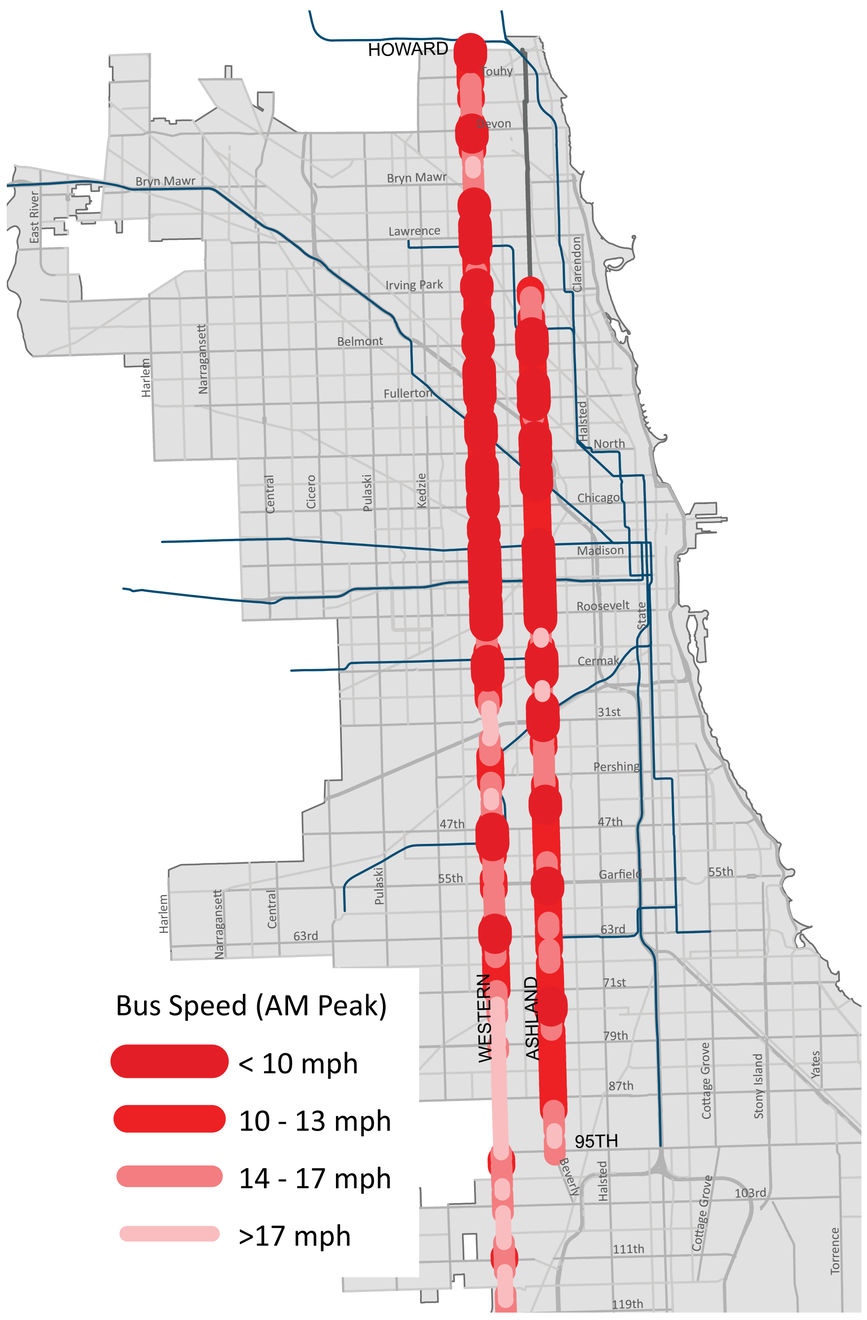
Project Background

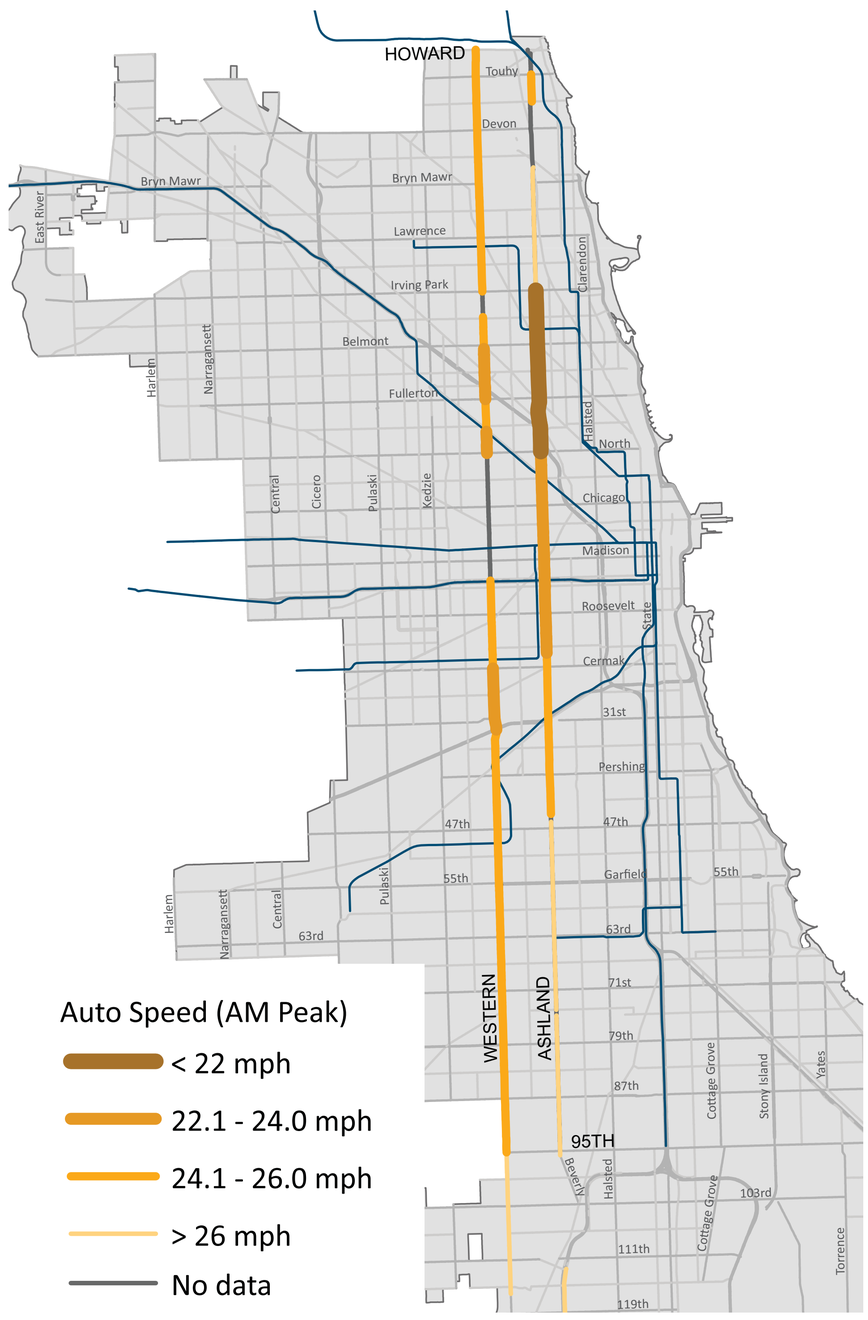
Travel Times

- Western and Ashland are the 2nd and 3rd highest weekday bus ridership routes in the CTA system, but travel is slowed by congestion.
- Traffic bottlenecks occur throughout the corridors.

Bus Speed (AM Peak)



Automobile Speed (AM Peak)



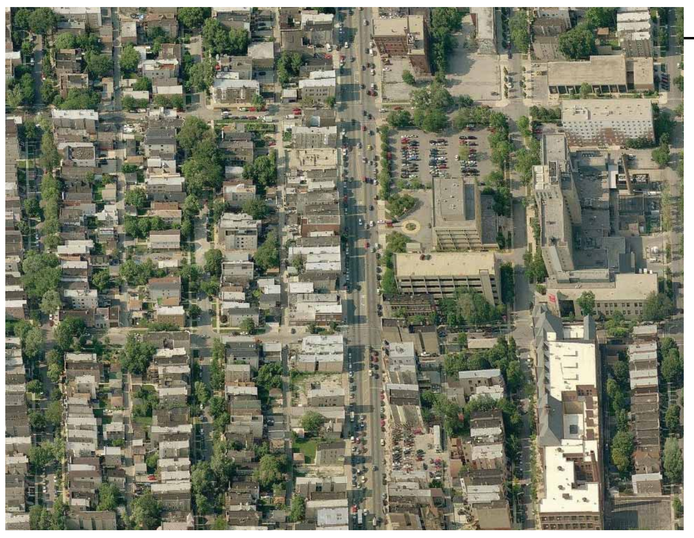
Corridor Characteristics

- Buses are only 1% of the vehicle mix, but carry up to 15% of the people making trips in the corridor.
- Approximately 45,500 commuters in the study area do not have access to a car.

Study Area Characteristics

- Major centers of activity and employment located west of the Loop
- Neighborhoods with high population and employment density
- Communities that would benefit from increased economic development
- Population within the project study area is 677,306
- Employment within the project study area is 187,414
- Both corridors have wide streets and sidewalks (right-of-ways)

High density neighborhoods throughout



Illinois Medical District is a major employer

Photo By Randy Escarada

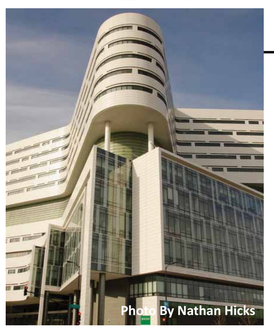
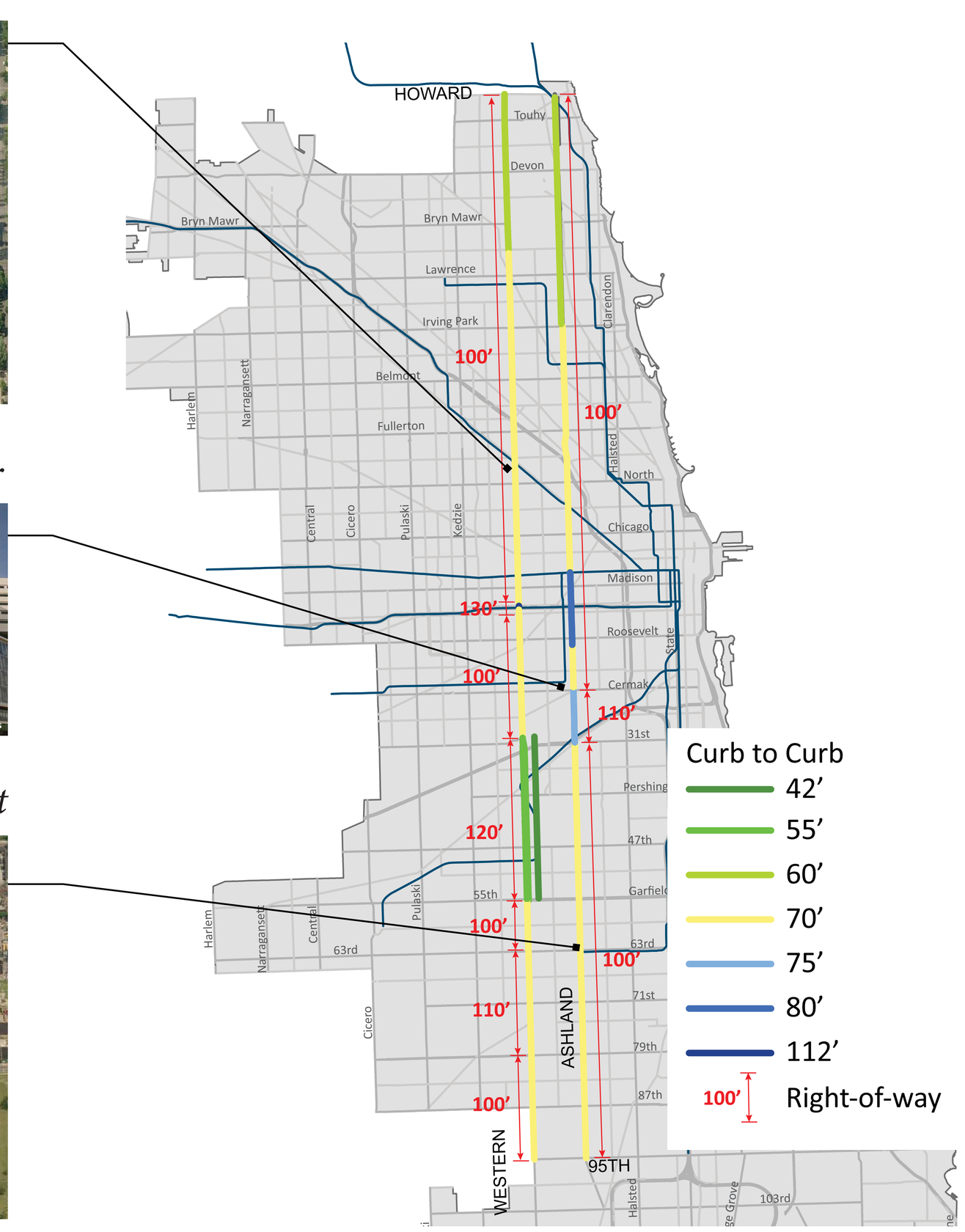


Photo By Nathan Hicks

High density neighborhoods throughout



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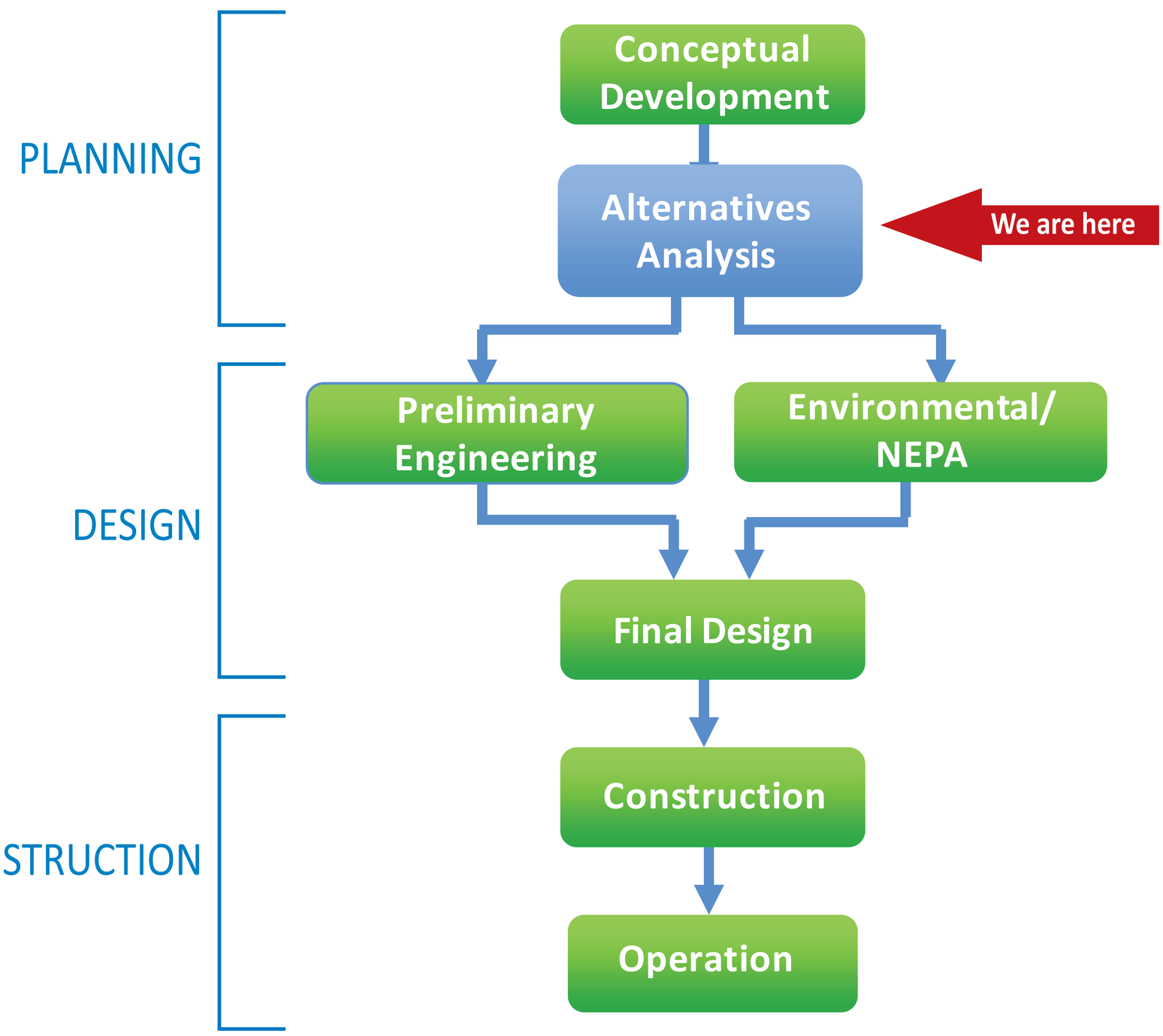
Project Planning Process

Overall Process

- Required by Federal Transit Administration
- Three phases: planning, design and construction

Alternatives Analysis Phase

- Studies the potential impacts of the various project options
- Identifies options or “alternatives” that include different features and service plans



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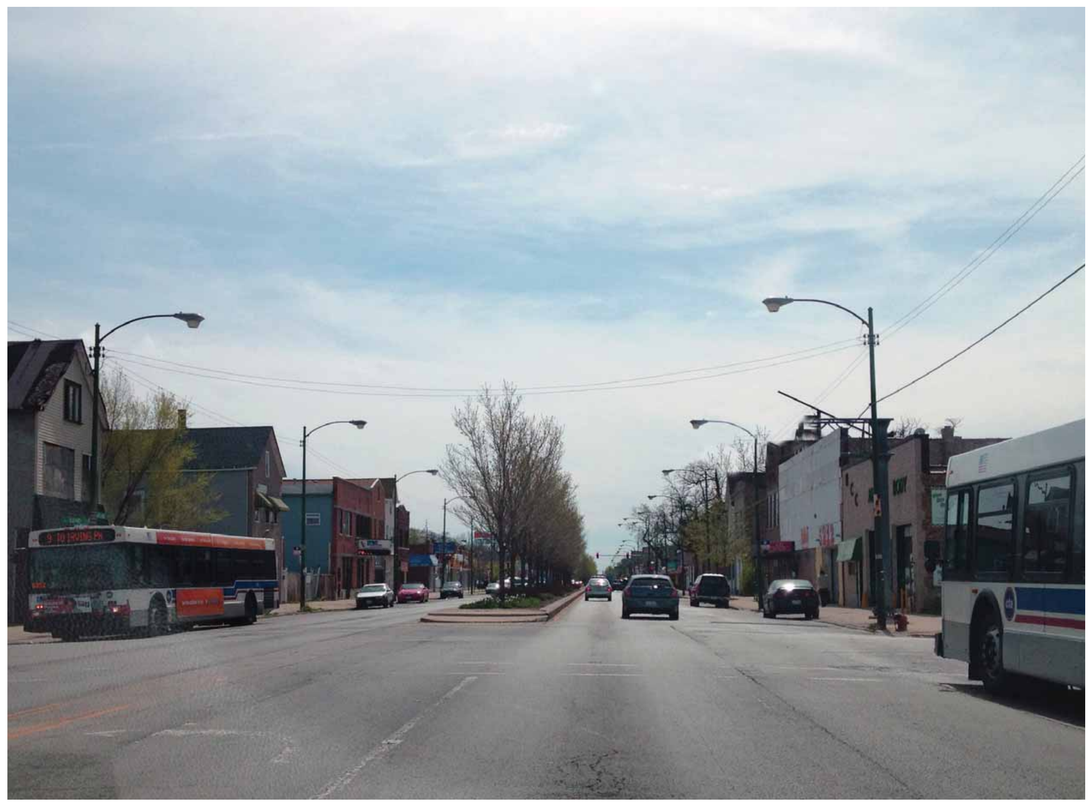
Project Need and Project Purpose

Why is this project needed?

CTA and CDOT are studying these corridors for improvements because:



- Slow bus travel speeds.
- Unreliable bus travel times.
- Large number of transit-reliant customers.
- Existing street design no longer meets corridor travel needs or city transportation and land use policy objectives.
- Non-downtown north/south connections lack a fast transit alternative for long trips.

What is the purpose of this project?

Through this project, CTA and CDOT hope to:

- Strengthen the non-downtown, north-south connections to CTA and Metra's transit network while improving regional, neighborhood and job connectivity.
- Provide a high quality bus travel experience by improving reliability, travel speeds and ease of use.
- Provide a transportation alternative in order to meet city/regional livability and economic goals.
- Balance road design with current and future demand for increased capacity along the corridors.
- Ensure solutions address physical and financial constraints.

Project Goals and Objectives

CTA and CDOT will be evaluating project options based on the following goals and objectives:

- **Expand** premium transit network
- **Integrate** local bus service with premium service
- **Meet** design standards
- **Use** existing curb-to-curb street width
- **Use** a unique, specialized dedicated fleet
- **Enforce** bus lane restrictions
- **Design**:
  - Interconnectivity with CTA rail, Metra and bus service
  - For future expansion flexibility
- **Enhance**:
  - Integration with adjacent land uses
  - Streetscape
- **Improve**:
  - Transit speed
  - Reliability
  - Ride quality
  - Waiting and boarding experience
  - Pedestrian access, safety and experience
- **Minimize**:
  - Impacts to on-street parking and loading
  - Construction duration and intensity
  - Costs for capital expenses, bus operations and roadway maintenance

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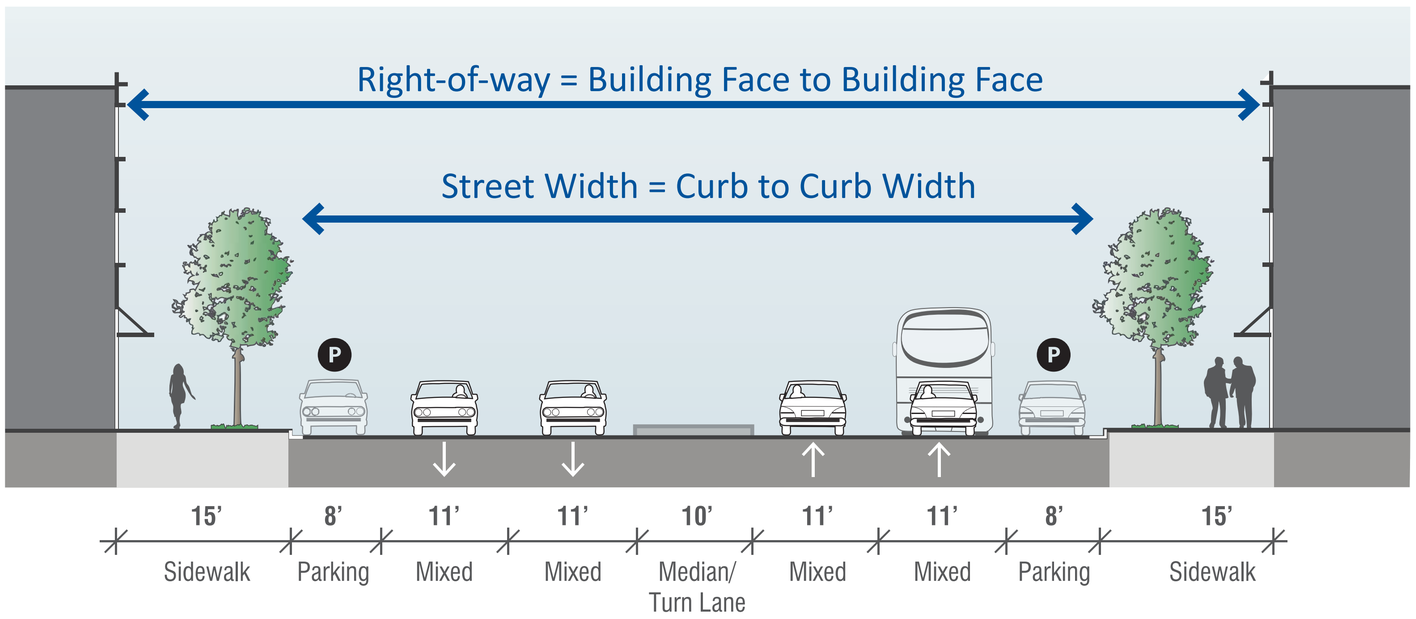
Process for Developing and Evaluating Options

Many BRT options that fit within the existing street and sidewalks (right-of-way) are being evaluated.

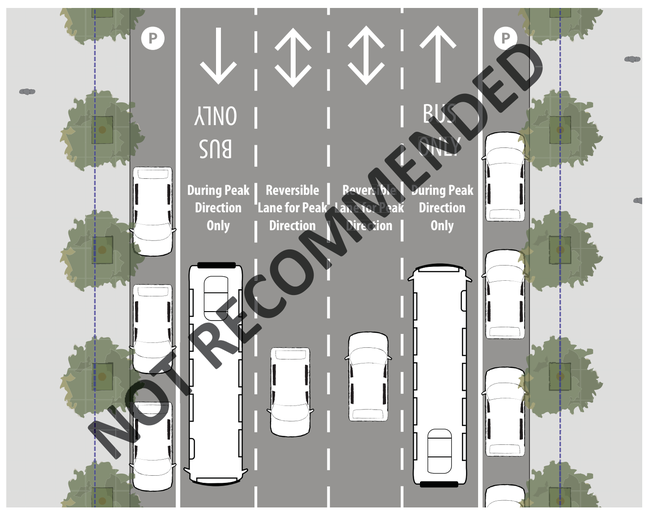
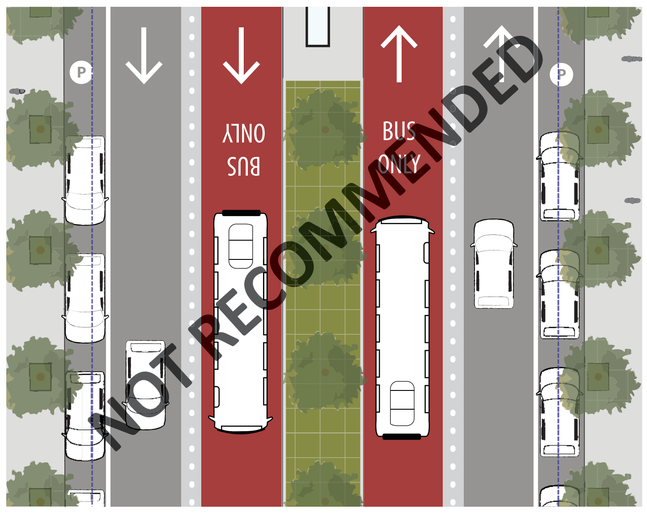
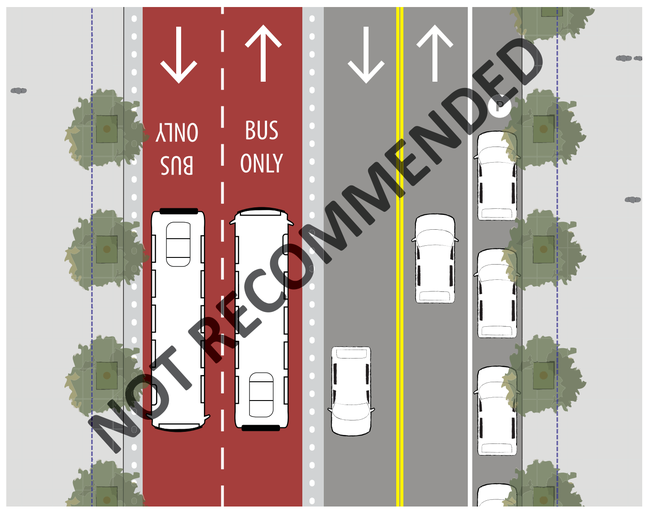


Considerations when developing potential options

- Location of bus-only lanes:
  - Curbside bus-only lanes
  - Center bus-only lanes
  - Two-way adjacent bus-only lanes
  - Barrier separated bus-only lanes
  - Reversible and peak-hour lanes
- Use of right-of-way
  - Sidewalk widths
  - Travel Lanes
  - Parking

Options Not Recommended for Further Evaluation

Options that present safety concerns, operational difficulties or did not meet CDOT and CTA standards are not being recommended for further analysis. These include:

Option	Reason for Eliminating	Example
Reversible lanes for traffic	Traffic does not have a dominant direction during peak travel periods	
Concrete barrier between lanes	Concrete barriers prevent buses and emergency vehicles from passing and hinder snow removal.	
Two-way adjacent busway	Creates operational difficulties at intersections and major issues at loading zones	

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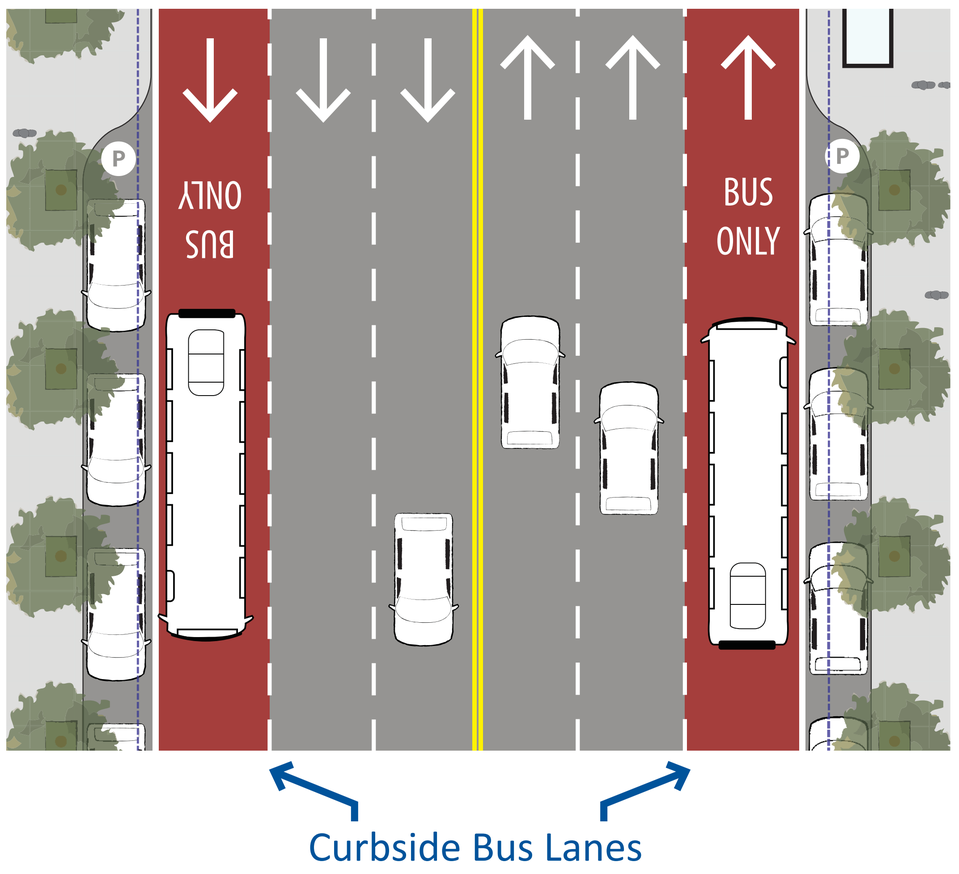
Options Recommended for Further Evaluation

Six options have been recommended to advance to the next phase of further analysis:

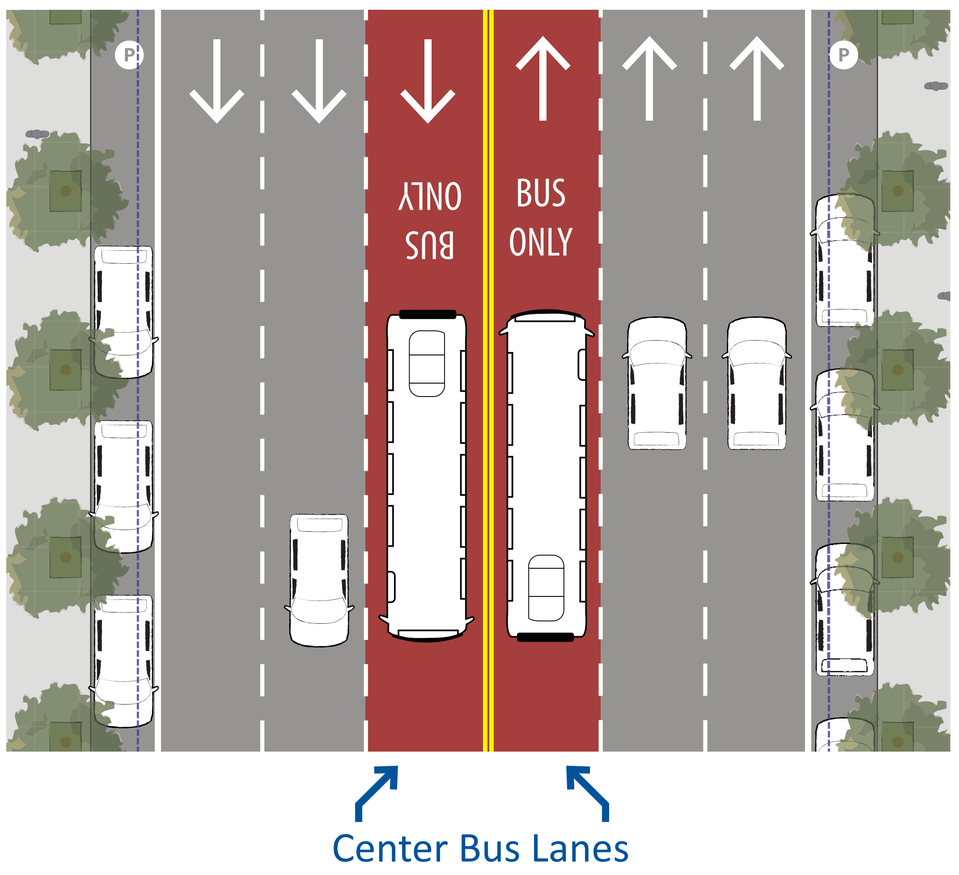
Curbside Bus–Only Lanes in each Direction:

1. Removes parking lane in each direction
2. Removes travel lane in each direction
3. Reduces sidewalk width in each direction*



Center Bus–Only Lanes in each Direction:

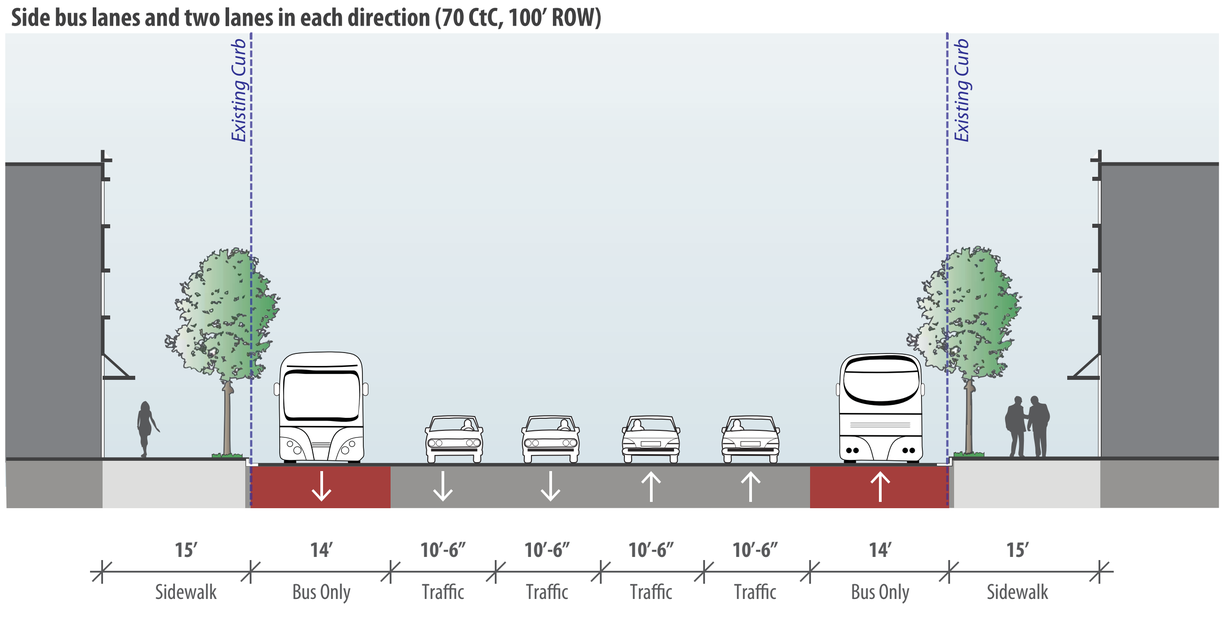
4. Removes parking lane in each direction
5. Removes travel lane in each direction
6. Reduces sidewalk width in each direction*



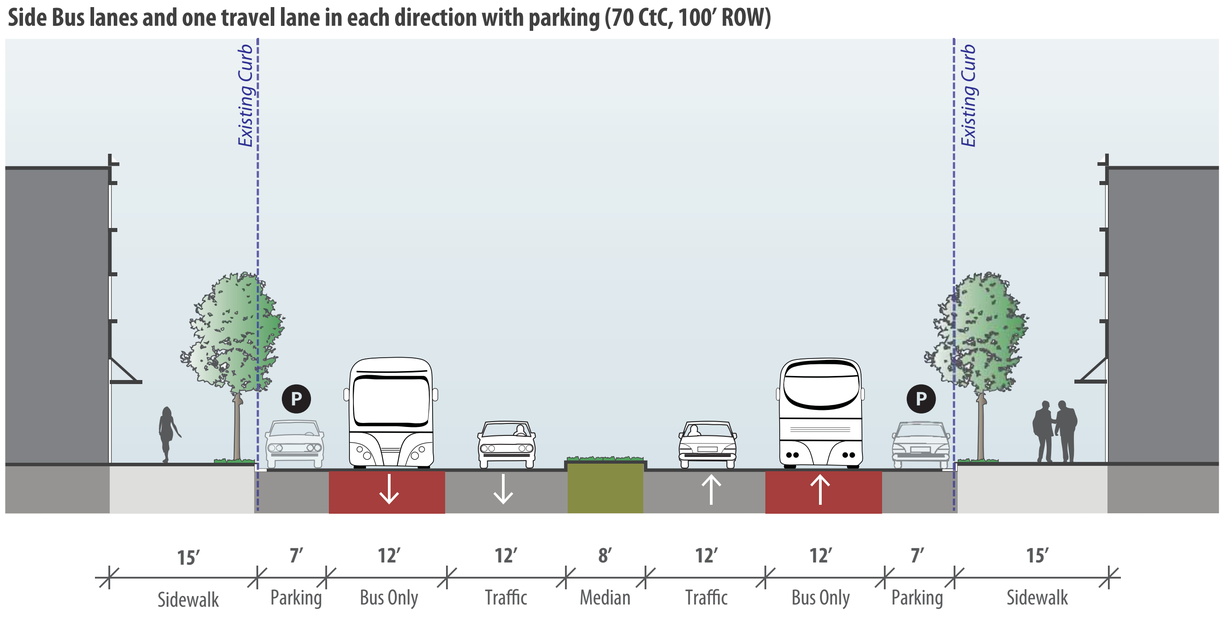
** Reducing sidewalk widths requires moving the existing curb*

Recommended Curbside Bus-Only Lane Examples

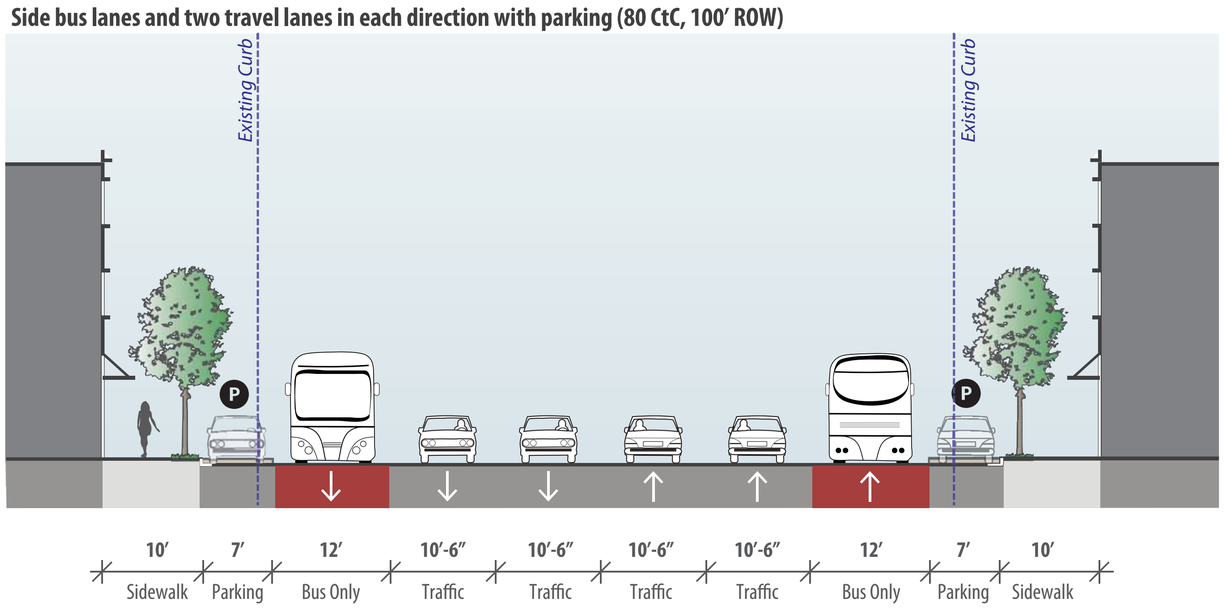
Option 1 : Removes Parking Lanes



Option 2: Removes Travel Lanes

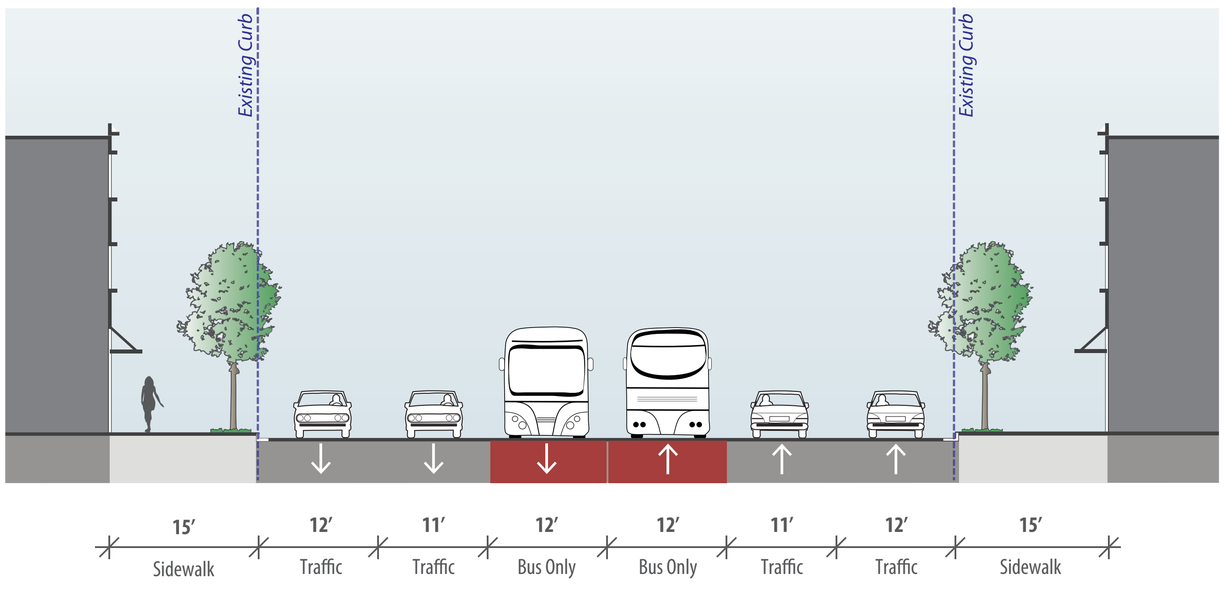


Option 3: Reduces Sidewalk Width

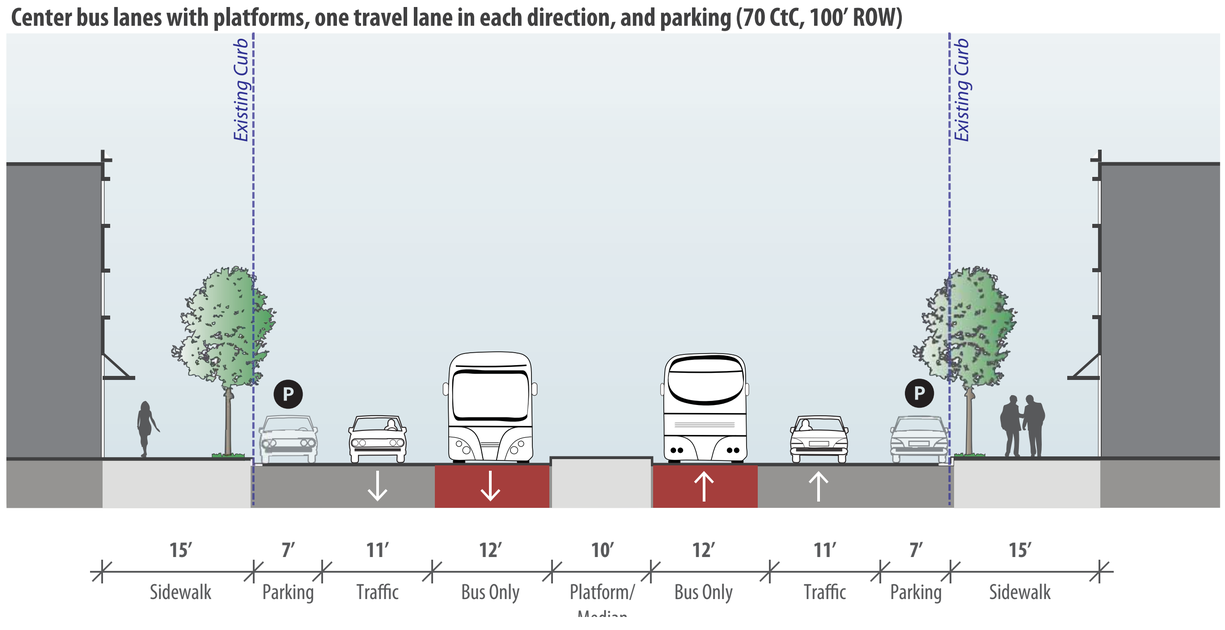


Recommended
Center Bus-Only Lane Examples

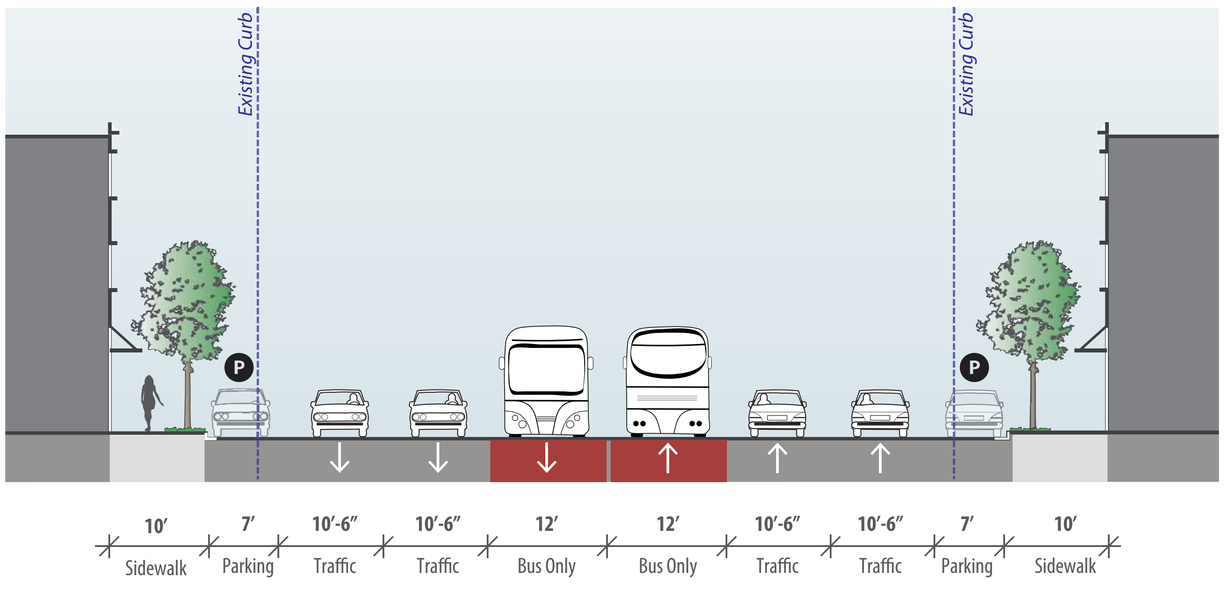
Option 4: Removes Parking Lanes



Option 5: Removes Travel Lanes



Option 6: Reduces Sidewalk Width



The Six Recommended Options can be Mixed and Matched Along Both Corridors

BRT with Curb Relocation

Options include adding:

Curbside Bus Lanes

Center Bus Lanes

Mix and Match along Corridors

BRT within Existing Curb

Options include adding:

Curbside Bus Lanes

Center Bus Lanes

No Bus Lanes (with bump outs and queue jumps)

Next Phase of the Study - Detailed Analysis

Potential positive and negative impacts from the proposed project will be evaluated and considered including:

- Parking
- Travel lanes
- Station spacing
- Sidewalks

A more detailed analysis of the six recommended options will be conducted to develop and evaluate:

- Placement of options along the corridors
- Service patterns
- Length of corridors
- Station and streetscape amenities
- Specific street widths

The recommended six options will be evaluated against a no-build option and an option that has a faster bus operating in mixed traffic.

Conceptual Rendering for BRT Station

Next Steps

Task	Date
Review Comments from Public Open House Meetings	Summer 2012
Complete Phase I (Broad) Planning Study Report	Summer 2012
Conduct Phase II (Detailed) Analysis	Summer/ Early Fall 2012
Share Draft Plan at Public Open House Meetings	Fall 2012
Select Final Plan (Locally Preferred Alternative)	Winter 2012/13

Conceptual Rendering for BRT Station

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Stay Involved!

To submit comments tonight, fill out a comment card and place it in the box provided.

Join Mailing/E-list: At the sign-in desk

Mail:

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Attn: Joe Iacobucci
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E-mail: westernashlandbrt@transitchicago.com

Web: To learn more about this project visit www.transitchicago.com/westernashlandbrt

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